

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman André Carson joined a bipartisan majority of his colleagues in supporting H.R. 6599, the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs FY09 Appropriations Act. H.R. 6599 allocates over \$40 billion for veterans' medical care and rejects President Bush's proposal to cut the Department of Veterans Affairs construction by \$788 million.

"The FY09 Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act properly prioritizes the medical needs of our nation's brave veterans by mandating that more federal resources be directed towards VA programs that assist veterans suffering from physical injuries and mental health ailments," said Congressman Carson. "H.R. 6599 serves as a clear indicator of Congressional Democrats' strong commitment to ensuring that our government takes care of those patriotic men and women who risked their lives to preserve our democracy and protect our freedoms."

The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs FY09 Appropriations Act will enable the Veterans Health Administration to treat more than 5.8 million patients in 2009 including more than 333,275 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan war campaigns (40,000 more than 2008). The legislation also allocates \$3.8 billion for specialty mental health care and \$584 million for substance abuse programs.

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